

BELMONT HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION

Meeting Minutes
May 7, 2008
Town Hall

Attending: Richard Cheek, Michael Smith, CO-Chairs; Chip Bell, Peter Gunness, Arleyn Levee, Lydia Ogilby, and Nancy Richards
Guests: Tom Saltzman, Andrew Bennett, Elfrieda Anderson, Eric Anderson

The Pleasant Street Planting subcommittee meeting had taken place prior to the regular HDC meeting. Notes from this meeting are attached.

[The intended first item on the agenda-the presentation by Chris Starr and architect re development of the SPierce Building, Cushing Square was postponed until a future meeting]

1. Re: #5 Somerset Street wall, grades and Pleasant Street gate
Paul Bell and Arleyn Levee had met previously with home-owner Rachel Van der Vort and architect Tom Saltzman on April 11th at the Somerset St. site to discuss various proposed site changes. It was noted at that time that Nancy Bergen was redesigning landscape features and plantings. Original plantings along the Pleasant Street side of the house had been removed, replaced by a double row of privet. Changes to plantings and grades along the slope on the north side of the house were also proposed. The wall and drive opening along Pleasant Street were also inspected with an eye to designing a gate in this area. Richard Cheek had provided copies of several historic views of appropriate design alternatives.
Following on this earlier meeting, Tom Saltzman presented a sketch indicating proposed changes to existing bluestone terrace on the north side of the house, a redesign and extension of existing retaining wall and grade changes of the slope. In addition to providing an enlarged eating space off the kitchen, the purpose is to provide an enclosure for the air conditioning condensers. After discussion concerning the exact dimensions and shape of the proposed wall changes, the connection between the bluestone terrace and the front porch and the treatment of the 'decking' proposed to cover the condensers, it was suggested that Mr. Saltzman return with a more detailed plan, with dimensions. In particular, it was requested that the plan indicate more precisely how the extended porch would abut the house, how the condensers would be accessed and the various grade changes intended.
Additionally, there was discussion about a desired gate at the Pleasant Street driveway entrance. This issue is complicated by the extant height of the stone wall and the problems of inserting or connecting an effective gate in this space. The issue was not resolved.

2. Re: # 26 Centre Avenue
Andrew Bennett, the homeowner, came to discuss the need to replace the porch on his home. He noted that the extant porch dates from a later period than the rest of the house. Since he intends to replace the porch in kind, only a letter of intent is required which Richard will send along with his letter to the Building Department stating that the proposed work represents ordinary maintenance and therefore does not require the issuance of a Certificate of Appropriateness.

3. RE #548 Pleasant Street roof replacement and new paint colors
Mrs. Anderson presented sample of roof shingles she intends to use to replace the existing roof. The color will change from extant grey-green to pewter grey, called Pewter Wood ??
She also discussed various desired changes to the house colors, from existing yellow with green trim?? to a pale yellow with white trim [Benjamin Moore historic paint series]. Richard suggested she consult with the Historic New England historic paint chart. In addition, she would like to put

shutters on the house. Richard requested that she provide evidence that this house originally had shutters.

Mrs Anderson needs to fill out a Certificate of Appropriateness indicating all proposed color and other changes- re roof, re house, re trim, re shutters and their color. Names and addresses of all line-of-sight abutters must be submitted to Sandra Curro of the Selectmen's Office so she can send them notice of the application.

4. Re: Belmont Street/Trapelo Rd Project

Mike Smith discussed the sub-committee meetings that had previously taken place concerning this project at the Equus Design Group office. Paul Bell, Nancy Richards, Arleyn Levee and Mike had each taken maps of a portion of the Project to comment upon the proposed changes. At a second meeting Chip, Arleyn and Mike reviewed the possibilities for the Waverly and the Cushing Square areas.

Mike noted that there was the potential for a large number of housing units in the Cushing Square Overlay District; that Town Meeting had passed the proposal to discontinue Horne Road and to prepare an RFP for the municipal parking lot.

5. Re: Comprehensive Plan

Richard noted that Karl Haglund from the Planning Commission would like to meet with the HDC to discuss its role in the comprehensive planning agenda.

6. Re: McLean Hospital stone walls

Chip Bell and Arleyn Levee had met on the site on two previous occasions with Andy Healey and Beth Macaluso of the McLean Hospital Engineering Dept. to try to ensure that replacement stone walls along the Pleasant Street corridor were in keeping with the original historic walls in character, size of stone, type of construction. This McLean project was being done in conjunction with the Mass Highway Pleasant St work. The dry-stone type walls in process of being constructed by the Mass Highway team were very well done, but there were two problem areas- the junction at the end of Olmsted Drive where the walls along the drive are of a very different character and the slopes are steep; and at the Trapelo Rd junction concerning the wall treatment around the Gate House. The BHDC representatives had offered several suggestions but none provided a completely satisfactory resolution of the design problems. Therefore, the BHDC sent off a memorandum [attached] suggesting that McLean consult the original landscape architectural plan for these areas.

7. Re: Accessory Buildings Preservation Bylaw

Richard noted he is still waiting for the final version of the revised bylaw and will forward this to Mike Smith.

8. Re: Police Station and Municipal Light Buildings

No new information available.

9. Re: Central Fire Station conversion

Work continues extremely slowly on this site so it is still unclear when the restaurant construction will begin.

10. RE: Community Preservation Act

Peter Gunness reported that Lisa Harrington had attended the recent meeting on this topic and would report on it at a future meeting. It is probable that it will be recommended that the Town adopt this Act.

11. Re: Pleasant Street Historic District Design Guidelines

These are still in process.

12. Re: Minutes

Minutes of former meeting will be forthcoming.

13. RE: New Business

1) Peter Gunness had questions concerning the noise bylaw. There is a problem in the Historic District where the trucks downshift, particularly at the Concord Avenue end. He was advised to contact Glenn Clancy.

2) RE: Homer Building-Assistant Town Manager Jeffrey Conti contacted the HDC concerning the need for additional exterior new air conditioning and electric back-up equipment to cool the Town's communications center. They want to enlarge an area at the rear of the building which would impact the walls of the existing delivery entrance. Since new equipment had been installed last year to serve the same purpose, various members of the HDC questioned this request: why was this equipment inadequate? Could the existing equipment not be enlarged or replaced in situ rather than adding yet other pieces? Are there any spaces within the building to accommodate these pieces?

It was concluded that more information was needed to assess this request. Mike Smith and Paul Bell to follow up with Jeff Conti.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:45pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Arleyn Levee